॥ ॐ श्रीः ॥

THE TRUE STORY
OF
THE BHARATI CONTROVERSY FIASCO

anent the Public Debate with
H. H. SHRI PURI JAGADGURU.

131

526

BY

Rao Sahib N. NATESA IYER B.A., B.L., *Madura.*

AND

Gurubhaktasikhamani
T. K. BALASUBRAHMANYA IYER B. A.
Srirangam.

Price Annas 2 only.

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THE GENESIS OF THE CONTROVERSY.

It was on Sunday the 7th of January 1934 that His Holiness Shri Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya Swamiji of Shri Govardhana Mutt, Puri, arrived at Madura; and, in His programme of lectures, He arranged to deal with the Untouchability and Temple-entry questions in two discourses of His. In the first discourse which was from 7-36 P. M to 12-11 A. M. on the 16th instant, His Holiness spoke on the Temple-entry question from the standpoint of General Ethics, Individual and Communal Religious Liberty, Constitutional Law, Queen Victoria's Proclamation, Congress Policy, the Law of Trusts and so forth; and, in the second discourse on the 17th evening, He was to deal with Untouchability and Temple-entry from the purely Scriptural standpoint.

In the first discourse, pandemonium prevailed, owing to continuous interruptions and disturbances by the microscopically small but, as usual, vociferous Reformist and Communist element present at the meeting. His Holiness refused to be cowed down by—nay, by His firmness, beat down—the pandemonium, completed the lecture and towards the end thereof, while announcing the subject of the next day's lecture, mentioned that not merely the Agamas, Puranas, Itihasas, Smritis and other so-called "later" literature of Sanatana Dharma but even the Vedas themselves actually inculcated caste divisions based on birth and the untoucha-

bility and even unapproachability of certain castes by birth and throughout life; that this interpretation of the Scriptures in question was supported not merely by the Bhashyas of Bhagavan Shri Shankaracharya and other Sanatani Commentators but by all the Commentators of the Vedas commencing from the great Niruktakara Shri Yaska himself down even to Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the redoubtable Social Reformer and Founder of the Arya Samaj; that the present-day "Social Reformers'" pretentions to base their temple-entry and anti-untouchability movements on the teachings of the Sanatani scriptures, were thus absolutely hollow and unjustifiable; and that His Holiness would deal with this subject in full detail in the course of His next evening's discourse.

It was at this point that Mr. L. Krishnaswamy Bharati got up and said that this challenge to the reformers would be accepted by him and arrangements should be made for a debate on the matter. His Holiness had not, as a matter of fact, "thrown out" any challenge but if and when Mr. Bharati described it as a "challenge" and offered to accept it, the proposal was readily agreed to by His Holiness. But, as His Holiness was already engaged to deliver a lecture at the Meenakshi Girls' School and the promised discourse on the Untouchability question itself the next evening and night respectively and as He was to leave Madura for Devakottai at about 3 P. M. the day after, it was not possible to arrange for the desired discussion during that visit of His Holiness to Madura. As His Holiness was, however expected back in Madura for the Tamil Nadu Sa-

natana Dharma Conference in February, the announcement was made that the proposed debate might, could and would be held during His second visit to Madura.

In passing, we might mention that neither Mr. L. K. Bharati nor any other of the first day's questioners and interrupters attended the second day's discourse which was delivered from 7-45 P. M. to midnight, and which actually dealt with a huge multitude of Srutis and other Sanatani Scriptures substantiating the Sanatani attitude on Untouchability (even according to Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Shukla Yajurveda Bhashya and his Satyartha Prakasha).

His Holiness actually returned to Madura on the 15th of February and presided over the Tamil Nadu Sanatanist Conference on the 17th and 18th February.

Although the understanding was for the holding of the debate after His Holiness' return to Madura, yet in the meantime, just three days before His Holiness's return to Madura i, e., on 12-2-34, Mr. L. Krishnaswamy Bharati was impatient enough to write to me (who was in charge of the arrangements for His Holiness' programme on both occasions), a letter reminding me of the promised discussion and asking me to fix up the date, place and time therefor. And that letter is letter No. 1 with which the correspondence published in this pamphlet commences. The whole correspondence is being published because lots of wrong statements have been and are—deliberately or through sheer ignorance—being published in and by various newspapers in Madras and elsewhere. Along with the correspondence, connec-

ting links and relevent comments are also being appended, in order to throw the requisite full historical light on the whole affair and enable the impartial reader to rightly gauge and correctly understand the actual position.

N. Natesa Aiyar.

Letter No. 1

L. Krishnaswamy, M. A. B. L.,
Advocate.

North Avani,
Madura, 12—2—34.

To Rao Saheb, N. Natesa Aiyar B.A., B.L.
Advocate, Madura.

Respected Sir,

I daresay you remember the challenge of His Holiness Jagatguru Sri Sankarachari Swamiji Avergal of Puri, and its acceptance by me. I was expecting you to fix up the date, place and time for the discussion, as promised by you, the other night.

May I request you to be good enough to consult His Holiness's convenience for the discussion, and let me know? Only let me have 3 days' time at least in advance, so as to enable me to bring those learned men who are equally vehement in declaring that untouchability by birth, as practised to-day, has no Shastraic Sanction behind it, whatsoever.

Anyway, we are all humble Seekers after Truth, and are out to establish "Ramarajya" or "Dharmarajya", as you may call it, in this ancient land of ours and save our wonderful Religion from threatening

doom. In that noble endeavour, which seems to be the common aim of both of us, let us try to understand each other better in an atmosphere of calm and good-will. That will be of mutual benefit, and bring ultimate good to the Nation. I daresay you will credit us all with the same sincerity of purpose, and honesty of conviction, as we certainly do credit you all with.

Lastly, let me make my humble appeal to you all to try to understand modern problems in terms of the changing times and circumstances. Frail man can do but little to stem the sweeping tide of the Times. Like the elements of Nature, Goddess Time sends out Her wonderful warnings, now and then, as if to say "Frail Man! be humble. Know thy limitations. You are but a speck in the scheme of things. Go ahead; or you are gone. Swim along the current; or thou sinkest". Well perhaps I have digressed into some philosophical disquisition. You may not want it. But I have written what I felt; and there it is, whether you want it or no.

Awaiting your reply in time, and thanking you,

Yours truly,

(Sd.) L. KRISHNASWAMY BHARATI.

NOTES ON THE ABOVE.

1. My introductory note under the caption "The Genesis of the Controversy" must already have made it clear that there was no 'challenge from His Holiness but only a statement of His position, which Mr. L. K. Bharati described as a "challenge" and offered to accept. We had no serious objection to this; but the word "challenge" used by him at the time and repeated by him and others again and again (as

if a "challenge" had emanated from His Holiness) can only be described as a "terminological inexactitude"!

2. Yes, it was I that was to fix up the date, place and time for the discussion. But it was to be *after* His Holiness' return to Madura and not *before.*

3. From this first letter of Mr. L. K. Bharati, it will be clear that, whatever his insurgent and intransigeant attitude might have been at the time of His Holiness's discourse on the 16th of January, he had cooled down subsequently and, by the time that he wrote the above letter, he had obviously come down to the position that the discussion should be, not of the militant and spectacular type, which was to bring about a decision binding on all for all time to come but only in the nature of an *exchange of thought* calculated to enable both the parties "to understand each other better in an atmosphere of calm and goodwill" and "to establish Ramarajya or Dharmarajya in this ancient land of ours" and so on! As this is quite clear from paragraph 3 of his letter, no further comment is necessary hereon just now.

4. As to the argument in his fourth paragraph that "Frail man can do but little to stem the sweeping tide of the Times" and so forth, I could have answered that the Laws of Nature are inexorable, that our Varnashrama Dharma is *scientifically* based upon these very Laws of Nature and that whatever the times and the tides thereof may say on such matters, it is neither time nor tide that has the last say thereon and can save from destruction those who float mechanically down the current but Nature herself that has the last say and "punishes ignorant blundering as severely and as relentlessly as she punishes deliberate sinning"! But there was no need for me to go into a philosophical disquisi-

tion on this subject with Mr. L. K. Bharati. I therefore contented myself with a formal reply which is the next letter to be published in this pamphlet.

N. N.

Letter No. 2

Mr. NATESA AIYAR'S REPLY

13—2—34.

I am forwarding your letter to His Holiness. Meanwhile, I enclose herewith the copy of the Indian Mirror which contains the correspondence setting out what all happened at Devakotah.

I shall let you know as soon as I receive the reply from His Holiness.

Yours truly,
(Sd.) N. NATESA AIYAR.

NEXT CONNECTING LINK.

The conference having come to a close on the night of the 18th February, and as His Holiness had accepted the invitation of devotees at Sholavandan, Tiruvedagam, Tenkarai, Mannadimangalam and Dindigul to grace those places with His presence during the first week of March, and was to reach Srirangam on the 8th of March, it was decided to devote one evening before His Holiness' departure from Madura, to the discussion on the untouchability question. The evening of the 28th February was fixed for the purpose; and I wrote on the 25th February to Mr. L. K. Bharati intimating that the proposed debate would be begun at

4 P. M. on the 28th inst. I thus gave him the three days' clear time that he had asked for. But when the letter was sent over to his house per personal messenger, it was found that he was not at home. The letter was therefore despatched to him by post. It was then learnt that he was away from town at Tirupuramkunram. Another letter was threfore addressed to him at that place; and it was then learnt that he had gone away to his village in the Tinnevelly District. The second letter, therefore, was sent by personal messenger to his office.

Mr. L. K. Bharati returned to Madura on the 27th of February and immediately wrote and sent over to me a letter which is published as item No. 3 in this series.

N. N.

Letter, No. 3

To Rao Saheb N. Natesa Aiyar, B. A., B.L., Madura.
Advocate, Madura. 27—2—34.

Dear Sir,

I arrived here by the Trivandrum Express this evening from my village in Tinnevelly District, where I had been absent for over a week. With deep regret, I learnt only just now that you had sent two letters fixing tomorrow.

As I wrote to you already I would three days, as I want to invite for the discussion on our behalf Prof. S. S. Bharati and some shastris from outside.

May I request you therefore to kindly consult Swamiji and fix up a date with 3 days clear notice, so that I may wire and get my friends down.

Even if Swamiji is moving to any other near place, I have no objection to the discussion being fixed at any one of those near places.

I shall thank you for an early reply. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours truly,

(Sd.) L. KRISHNASWAMI BHARATI.

NEXT CONNECTING LINK.

The next afternoon i. e, on 28-2-34, Mr. L. K. Bharati came to me at about 3 P. M., accompanied me to His Holiness' quarters and had audience of His Holiness from 4-10 to 4-25 P. M. Mr. Bharati repeated there the request contained in the just-above published letter and His Holiness agreed to comply therewith. But, as His Holiness was starting from Madura the very next day and had to cover many places within the week, it would not be possible for Him to allot any time to the proposed debate during that week (because it would involve the deprivation of devotees in those places of all chances of hearing His Holiness' discourses). It was therefore decided, in the course of that personal conversation, that the discussion should be on the 17th and 18th March at Shrirangam, where His Holiness was expected to stay for some weeks commencing from 8th March.

From Dindigul, however, on 8th March, His Holiness wrote to me that, in fixing the 17th and 18th March for the discussion (because they happened to be a Saturday and a Sunday), He had inadvertently lost sight of the fact that, on the 17th and 18th of March, He would have other functions to attend to in connection with the Aradhana celebrations of His Vidya Guru, the late Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya Swami of the Sringeri Peetha; and that, therefore, there was no alternative but to postpone the discussion to the 24th and 25th March (which, being a penultimate Saturday and Sunday respectively, were both holidays and therefore likely to be even more convenient to all persons than the dates originally fixed). I duly received this letter from His Holiness; but before I could communicate its contents to Mr. L. K. Bharati, the latter had written a letter on 6-3-34 directly to His Holiness. That letter is published as item No. 4 of this series.

N. N.

Letter No. 4

L. Krishnaswami Bharati,
Advocate

8 North Avani Moola
Street, Madura.
6—3—34.

To
H. H. Sankaracharìar Swamigal,
Camp, Dindigul.

Dear Swamiji,

I have written to my father-in-law Sjt. S. S. Bharatiar that our debate stands fixed to 17th and 18th

March at Trichinopoly; and he replied to me saying that he would go to Trichy for the discussion.

As requested by me in person, it is very necessary that you should let me know, at least 3 days in advance, the exact *time and place* in Trichinopoly for the discussion.

Awaiting your reply,

Yours truly,

(Sd.) L. KRISHNASWAMY BHARATI.

NEXT CONNECTING LINK.

Mr. L. K. Bharati's letter of 6-3-34 having been posted on 7-3-34 and reached Dindigul on 8-3-34 (i. e, after His Holiness had left Dindigul and reached Srirangam), it reached His Holiness at the latter place (redirected by post) on the 9th March. His Holiness' reply thereto is published hereunder.

T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar.

Letter No. 5

To

L. Krishnaswamy Bharati,
Advocate, Madura.
No. 2508.

Srirangam,
12th March 34.

My dear Chiramjeevi Krishnaswamy,

Yours of 6-3-34 duly to hand.

In connection with the Anniversary Celebrations of His Holiness the late Jagadguru of Shringeri, my

programme here for the 17th and 18th has been fixed already. It will, therefore, not be possible to spare any time on either of those two days, for the purpose in question.

I have, therefore, decided to allot some time on the evenings of the 24th and 25th insts, (both of them holidays) to this work. I trust this arrangement will suit you, Chi. Somasundaram and others concerned.

I had written from Dindigal to Chiramjeevi Natesa Iyer at Madura and asked him to inform you about this and enable you to give timely intimation to Chiramjeevi Somasundaram on the matter.

With Shri Narayanasmarana and choicest benedictions,

Affectionately yours ever,

श्रीशंकराचार्यः स्वामीश्रीभारतीकृष्णतीर्थः ।

P. S. The exact time and place for the meeting will be intimated to you later on.

NEXT CONNECTING LINK,

Then followed a lull in the correspondence until 17-3-34 when His Holiness received from Mr. Soma Sundara Bharati a letter, which is published as item No. 6 herein.

T. K. B.

Letter No 6

S. S. Bharati M. A. B. L.
Advocate & Professor

Annamalainagar,
S. India 16—3—34

To

The Agent to Sri Sankaracharya Swamiji of Puri Mutt,
c/o M. R. Ry, T. K. Balasubramania Iyer Avl.,
Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam.

Sir,

As advised by Mr N. Natesa Aiyer, Advocate, my Madura friends have asked me to write to you for information regarding the public debate Sri Swamiji offers to hold in Trichinopoly on the question "Whether Hindu Religion postulates and warrants hereditary human untouchability, or the perpetuation of any polluting Panchama castes among human beings?" When and where shall the debate be? Whether Swamiji will be pleased to conform to the rules and etiquette of a public debate? Whether any impartial neutral person will be accepted to act as an umpire or a moderator for and during the debate? What time limits are to be allotted to the respective spokesmen on either side? Whether say 30 or 45 minutes in the 1st instance and again 15 or 20 minutes to each for reply or rejounders will be agreeable to Swamiji?

I expect him rightly and justly to accept all the natural and legitimate implications and to respect and conform to the ordinary and usual rules of a public debate, and to make no bones of his peculiar position and spiritual station in life, but chivalrously to afford equal facility and freedom to his opponents in the

debate; for, he himself threw out an open challenge for this debate, which was promptly taken up by my friends in Madura and in response to which I am now asked to seek definite information from you. Of course I readily acceded to my friends' request to be their spokesman in this connection only in the hope of meeting an illustrious old college-mate of rare talents and rarer attainments.

Pray convey my warm regards to Swamiji, and his pleasure and convenience to me by the earliest return mail, and oblige.

Yours truly

(Sd.) S. S. BHARATI

NEXT CONNECTING LINK.

As the 17th of March was the Aradhana day of His Holiness's Vidyaguru (the late Jagadguru of Shringeri) His Holiness was busy with special Poojas and other functions connected therewith from 8-49 A. M. to 11-32 P. M. that day and was similarly incessantly busy on the 18th, 19th and 20th with urgent public functions; He therefore could not immediately send to Mr. Bharati the detailed reply necessitated by Mr. Bharati's own letter. On 21-3-34, His Holiness' reply was framed and sent to Mr. Bharati. Immediately thereafter, a very brief intimation thereof was sent to Mr. L. K. Bharati and also to Mr. Natesa Iyer.

On the same date, soon after these three letters were despatched to their respective addressees, a postcard dated 20-3-34 was received by His Holiness from Mr. S. S. Bharati. And on 22-3-34 (obviously before

His Holiness' letter of the 21st March was received by him), Mr. L. K. Bharati sent to His Holiness (by personal messenger), a letter enclosing a copy of Mr. S. S. Bharati's letter of 16-3-34 to His Holiness. The said messenger was sent back to Madura with His Holiness's brief reply to Mr. L. K. Bharati's letter.

And, on the 23rd. His Holiness received a postcard from Mr. S. S. Bharati in reply to His Holiness's letter of the 21st March. All these letters are published, next in order, as Nos. 7—13 of this series.

T. K. B.

Letter No. 7

Office of H. H. Shri Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya
of Puri, Camp, Srirangam,
21st March 1934.

No. 2768

Dear Mr Bharati,

Yours of 16—3—34 duly to hand. Owing to a heavy programme of special Poojas and other functions, it could not be acknowledged and answered earlier.

His Holinesss has never yet "made bones" of His "peculiar position and spiritual station in life" but has always "chivalrously offered equal facilities and freedom" to all inquirers and even to all opponents to present their views on any subject whatsoever. But this does not mean that His Holiness is prepared to accept the preposterous proposition that matters of Dharma Shastras (or even of any science whatsoever for that matter) can be referred to and decided by the votes of the igno-

rant mob. He was, is and will ever be an Indian Nationalist and a Democrat to the core, but He does not believe in Pseudo-democracy i. e., in mobocracy which masquerades under the guise of democracy!

As to "an impartial and neutral person" acting as "an umpire or a moderator for and during the debate", is it your idea—as it was Birkenhead's in connection with the Simon Commission—that an absolute ignoramus on the matters concerned will be "an impartial neutral person"? And is such a person to make use of his native intelligence alone (without any knowldge of the Shastras) to give his verdict on Shastraic matters under discussion? If that be the idea, His Holiness regrets that there is no possibility of His agreeing to any such proposition.

It is elementary common sense that an "Umpire" is one who is not merely not ignorant of, nor merely well versed in the matter under discussion, but must be of higher attainments and qualifications in regard to the principles and all the technical and other details of the matter under discussion than the controversialists themselves. If you are prepared to produce such a person, His Holiness, has no objection thereto. Any proposal for an Umpire of a different kind but with authority to give decisions would be the negation of Common Sense and a farcical travesty of democratic procedure!

As a matter of fact, as you are perhaps already aware, it is His Holiness's study of Comparative Religion and of the modern Positive Sciences that is really

responsible for the attitude He has been taking and presenting on the matter at issue. He therefore regards Himself as an absolutely impartial and neutral person on the matter. And if any new evidence be forthcoming—be it from the Sanatani Scriptures or from the point of view even of modern Postive Sciences, or Nationalism, or any other such factor—His Holiness is at all times absolutely ready to give full weight to such evidence and alter and guide His attitude in the matter (irrespective of the status and other such adventitious and external factors connected with the person who brings such evidence or argument for His Holiness's consideration). His Holiness is an Ecclesiastical Head of Sanatana Dharmi Hinduism; and He is reverenced as a Jagadguru by millions of people. But He Himself regards Himself as an earnest Student and Searcher after Truth, and is always willing to learn! The proposal for an Umpire is therefore neither in the fitness of things (except under Birkenheadian philosophy), nor necessary under these circumstances.

And, after all, the proposed talks are not for the purpose of arriving at a decision which will mechanically bind either party, but only intended for an exchange of ideas, with a view to mutual understanding. If your facts figures, quotations, interpretations, arguments and so forth are correct and convincing, you may absolutely depend on His Holiness doing justice thereto. With practically a whole lifetime's devotion to and study of these very subjects, His Holiness is incapable of adopting any other attitude on the matter. And He is "chivalrous enough" (to use your own expression) to

take it for granted that you will similarly do justice to such facts, figures, texts, and arguments as He will place before you. This is the only way a discussion can be held between persons who are earnest in their search after the Truth, who are open to conviction and who are not impervious to new facts, figures etc.

As for a time-limit, none is necessary (except in so far as the Pooja and other engagements of His Holiness and your own functions elsewhere may unavoidably impose). In fact, the idea of a mechanical limit of a few minutes for deciding serious questions of this type (which often require not a single, but many lifetimes of study for arriving at a final decision), is something incongruous! His Holiness, therefore, does not propose to put any such restriction on your liberty to take your own time. You may take not 15, 20 or 45 minutes, but, as much time as may be necessary for the presentation of your texts, facts and arguments.

Of course, His Holiness does not expect you, of all persons, to adopt the procedure which was actually adopted at Madura and at Sholavandan by Munagala Pattabhiramiah (of the latter place), who actully expressed the opinion that a knowledge of even elementary Sanskrit language, grammar, lexicography and literature was not necessary for the right understanding of texts from the Vedas, the Smritis and so on! It needs no pointing out that, on such a basis, there can be no fruitful discussion or interchange of thought.

As to your agreeing to the request of Mr. L. K. Bharati and others to be their spokesman in this connection, only in the hope of meeting His Holiness, whom you recognise and refer to as "an illustrious

old College-mate of rare talents and rarer attainments", I need only say that His Holiness too cordially reciprocates the loving wish for a meeting: and that, in fact—as soon as (after returning to this part of the country after an absence of about 30 years) he heard your name—he not merely recollected previous associations, but talked lovingly about them to Mr. Natesa Aiyar and others at Madura.

Whatever therefore may be the outcome of the meeting in respect of the Untouchability question, His Holiness has no doubt that, even if it proves of absolutely no benefit from that standpoint, it will surely be one of pleasure to both, from the personal standpoint, for old times' sake !

From this point of view, His Holiness would like you to come over here not at 4. 30. P. M. (the time fixed for the meeting) on Saturday, the 24th instant, but if possible by about 8. 40. A. M. the same morning, so that there might be a preliminary personal talk before the official discussions actually begin.

Trusting this will find you in the happy and unbroken enjoyment of the soundest of healths and the cheerfullest of spirits,

And with His Holiness's Shri Narayanasmarana and choicest benedictinos to yourself and all near and dear to you, for long life, and continued health, wealth, success and happiness all round (Spiritual and temporal).

(By Order)

Cordially and sincerely yours

(Sd) K. L. SHASTRI,

Manager.

Address:—

Shankaralaya, Ammamantapam Road, Srirangam.

Letters Nos. 8—9

No. 2773.

Srirangam,
21st March 34.

Dear Sir,

Mr. S. S. Bharati has just been informed by His Holiness that the proposed discussion is to be held at Shri Shankaralaya in the Ammamantapam Road, Srirangam at 4-30 p. m. on Saturday the 24th March 1934.

With His Holiness's Shri Narayanasmarana and choicest benedictions,

Cordially and sincerely yours,
(Sd) K. L. SHASTRI.
Manager.

To
L. K. Bharati,
Madura.

No. 2774. Copy to Rao Saheb N. Natesa Iyer

Post Card No 10

To,
Srilasri Swami Sankaracharyaji of Puri Mutt,
c/o T. K. Balasubramania Iyer Esq.,
Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam. (Via) Trichinopoly.

Annamalainagar,
20-3-34.

Sri Swamiji,

At the instance of Mr. N. Natesa Iyer of Madura, my friends wrote to me to write to your Agent & fix up the proposed debate as to the Religious warrant for hereditary Untouchability in Trichy. I wrote to your Agent accordingly on 16-3-34 soliciting definite information *re* time, place & other relevant particulars regarding the debate. But so far I got no reply whatsoever. I shall await definite information till 23-3 if I am to go there for the discussion on 24-3. If not,

I shall have to conclude that the proposed debate is dropped.

Soliciting early reply,
Yrs. Sincerely,
(Sd.) S. S. BHARATI

Letter No. 11

L. Krishnaswami Bharati M.A., B.L., Madura,
Advocate 22—8—1934.

To

H. H. Sri Sankaracharia Swamigal
of Puri Mutt,
Camp Trichinopoly.

Dear Swamiji,

I have your letter fixing up 24th and 25th for the debate; and mentioning that the time and place will be intimated to me later on.

I received a letter from the spokesman of our party Sjt. Somasundra Bharatiar today, saying that he wrote to your Holiness through your Agent with a view to fixing up the conditions for the debate. I dare say you are in possession of the letter. It seems he has not been favoured with a reply so far. He has also sent me a copy of the letter he has sent to you. I do not know why no reply has been sent to him so far. I am also sending a copy of the letter to you for prompt action, if not already done. I definitely wrote to you to give 3 days' clear notice to me fixing up the time and place; as friends have to come from distant places and timely intimation in advance regarding the time and place will serve to save time and energy. Tho it is 22nd today, I have not received the promised intimation. I am therefore sending a messenger to you to let us know definitely as to whether Mr. Somasundara Bharatiar can be asked to proceed to Trichy for the debate, as also other friends. May I first request

you to hand over your reply to the messenger, who is instructed to do what is best, in the face of your reply?

I hope to be excused for the trouble. It is essential that a reply to Sjt. Somasundara Bharati must be sent in time.

With humble namaskaras,
Yours affectionately,
(Sd) L. KRISHNASWAMI BHARATI.

Letter No. 12

Office of His Holiness
Shri Jagadguru
Shri Shankaracharya
No. 2865.

Sri Govardhana Mutt,
Puri,
Camp, Srirangam.
22nd March 1934.

Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 22-3-34 to hand.

Mr, S. S. Bharati of Chidambaram has been intimated (yesterday) that the proposed discussion is taking place in the Shankaralaya at Srirangam at 4-30 p. m. on Saturday the 24th March 1934. The same intimation has already been posted to you (yesterday) for your information.

Cordially and sincerely yours,
(Sd). K. L. Shastry.
Manager.

To
L. K. Bharati Esq., Madura.

Post Card No. 13

To
Brahmasri K L. Shastri Avl.,
Agent to Puri Mutt, Shankaralaya,
Ammamantapam Road,
Srirangam. (Via Trichy).

Annamalainagar, 22—3—34

Dear Sir,

Let me thank you for yr. kind note d. 21—3 and through you Sri Swamiji for his graciously kind

and courteous message and invitation. Yes, I shall not lightly forego the privilege of meeting such a personage, "for old times' sake", irrespective of the debate and its results. Only I may not be expected, to behave like a spiritual disciple, which of course I am not. But I shall not forget his august position, nor my humble station in life. He who was to attend the American Parliament of Religions on equal terms may be trusted to know what is due to all. I shall be there on Saturday morning.

Yrs in haste

(Sd) S. S. BHARATI.

NOTE ON THE ABOVE.

The penultimate sentence in the above post card is evidently due to the writer labouring under a serious misapprehension. The person who was to have attended the American Parliament of Religions was one Dr. Kurtkoti of Nasik and not His Holiness Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya Swamiji of Shri Govardhana Mutt, Puri. So, no question of "equal terms" or unequal terms really arises on the basis in question!

NEXT CONNECTING LINK.

As expected, Mr. S. S. Bharati and Mr. L. K. Bharati arrived at His Holiness's quarters in Srirangam at 8. 40. a. m. and were given audience immediately, His Holiness greeted the former as an old co-Tinnevellian collegemate at the Madras Christian College; and as the morning's meeting was intended to be a purely personal one "for old times' sake", His Holiness merely talked about old times and religiously refrained from uttering even one word about or making even the remotest reference to the

debate which was to come off in the evening ! Mr. S. S. Bharati himself broached the subject and talked about it. He seemed to imply that a debate was not a public debate unless there was an umpire or a mediator there-at. As His Holiness had already made His position perfectly clear on this matter in the course of His letter of 21-3-34, there was absolutely no justification or necessity for a reopening of that question. And, as a matter of fact, Mr. S. S. Bharati finally agreed, that, under the special and peculiar circusmtance of the case, he could not insist on having an umpire ; and yet, from the very beginning, he gravely expressed the view that there could be no useful purpose served by a discussion wherein, on the spur and in the heat of the moment, one would have to answer questions suddenly raised ; that the more satisfactory method from the point of view of the spirit of enquiry would be for His Holiness to reduce to writing and send over to Mr. Bharati the texts, interpretations and arguments which His Holiness relied on; that Mr. Bharati would thereupon have the necessary facility for considering all the points at issue, with a cool, calm and collected frame of mind; that if he were satisfied therewith, he would say so; that if he had any objection to raise or any further question to ask or any other doubt or difficulty to get cleared, he would send his reply ; and that the correspondence might take weeks or even months, but that would not matter, because there was no pressing urgency! (The actual expression used by Mr. Bharati in this connection was: கலியாண முஹூர்த்தம் ஒன்றும் கெட்டுப் போகப் போகிறதில்லை." (There is no marriage Muhoorta at stake) !

Both of us were called in when the personal talk, were still going on; and we were both present when the talk was turned by Mr. S. S. Bharati to the subject of the evening's debate. It was clear from the talks in our presence, that he was for a discussion not by public debate but by correspondence, while His Holiness and Mr. L. K. Bharati were against any such alteration of procedure. His Holiness desired, if possible, to keep to the programme announced and hold the debate; but when Mr. S. S. Bharati preferred the other method, His Holiness had no option but to agree thereto and said that as He had already intended to publish (in book-form) the texts etc. bearing on the matter and which He had been actually making use of in His lengthy and elaborate discourses of between 4 and 8 or 9 hours' duration in Madura, Devakottai, Karaikudi and other places there was no difficulty to Him in the procedure suggested, that He could and would send a printed copy of His booklet to Mr. S. S. Bharati, await his reply thereto and answer the same in due course!

Being however, even at that last stage, unwilling to drop the debate, His Holiness spoke of the serious disappointment which was sure to be caused to the huge audience which was expected to gather for the evening's proposed debate. Mr. Bharati thereupon declared that there should be absolutely no feeling of delicacy or hesitation on this score, that His Holiness need not disappoint the audience but might discourse to them on this very subject of untouchability and that he himself would attend it and start the proceedings by announcing to the house the circumstances under which the debate was dropped!

The Bharatis then took leave of His Holiness and came out; and there, in the course of our further conversation with them, we repeated that the debate should not be dropped and the expected audience disappointed. But, in the course of our further talk, a new and serious—nay insurmountable—hitch cropped up, which effectively and finally stood in the way of all

hopes of any such discussion materialising! The Bharatis insisted that, even if a public debate could be and were actually held, it was impossible for them to take part in it, unless one Somasundara Nadar and other representatives of the Depressed Classes (who had come from Madura to attend the debate) were also allowed into the Temple Mantapam where the debate was to be held. His Holiness was just then—i. e. at 10 A M.—passing out and going downstairs for His noon bath and Pooja and once again enquired whether it had been found possible to arrange to hold the debate as originally intended. And Mr. S. S. Bharati himself answered that a new hitch had arisen with regard to the admission of Mr. Somasundara Nadar and others, about whom he himself was not particular but having been called in as the mouthpiece of these very Depressed class workers from Madura, he could not go against their wishes and attend a meeting from which they were excluded!

As the question to be discussed was the justifiability or otherwise of such admission and as His Holiness (according to His honest and sincere understanding of Sanatana Dharma Scriptures bearing on the subject) was strongly against such admission, He naturally had no option but to state, and actually did state, that there was absolutely no sense in having an acadamical debate on such a question after permitting such admision in the actual practical action! His Holiness then went out of His way to ask us whether we could try and arrange to have some other venue for the debate? The only place which could be thought of for the purpose was the Srirangam High School; but we found it impracticable to see the authorities concerned and make all the necessary arrangements within the very short time that was yet at our disposal for the purpose! In the face of this new difficulty, which was sprung upon Him at the eleventh hour i.e. almost at the nick of time, His Holiness finally gave up hope of the debate materialising and had, therefore, most reluctantly, but most unavoidably, to agree to the abandonment thereof! He sent for

Mr. Bharati once again and tried yet another time to get him to agree to the discussion being held as originally arranged and announced to the public, i. e. at the Temple Mantapam itself. Mr. Bharati replied that he personally was not particular about the admission of Somasundaram Nadar and others; but, they being the persons who had called him to Trichy for the debate and there being absolutely no chance of their diluting their cantankerous nature and agreeing to his being their spokesman at a discussion, from which *they* were excluded, he concluded, by stating that *he* had not come with thoughts of victory, defeat and so forth; that defeat at the hands of His Holiness was no disgrace to him, but on the contrary, he would deem it an honour to himself; that His Holiness therefore need not take to heart or feel disappointed about the dropping of the debate; that the discussion could as well, nay even more satisfactorily (for the reasons already explained by him), be carried on calmly and coolly by means of correspondence; that His Holiness might address the evening's audience on the very question of untouchability, that he would himself attend it and that he would commence the proceedings with an introductory statement about the circumstances which led to the abandonment of the debate! And there, the matter ended for the time-being; and His Holiness went way for his noon bath and Pooja.

The expected huge audience began to gather from about 2 P. M. and at 4 P. M. all the available space was packed chokefull. His Holiness came down punctually at 4-30 P. M. and took His seat. But none from the other side turned up until 5-25 P. M. The audience was impatient, the more especially because, in the meantime, printed notices had been circulated broadcast about another meeting at 6 P. M. at which, under the auspices of the local Harijan Seva Sangham, there were to be speeches by Mr. S. S. Bharati and others on the question of "Sanatana Dharma and untouchability" and besides, scurrilous pampalets against orthodox Sanatana Dharma in general and His Holiness in

particular were being distributed at the entrance-gate to the Temple Mantapam from about 3 P. M. to all the comers-in! Copies of the handbills about the counter-meeting and of the scurrilous pamphlets were given to His Holiness by the audience; and it was pressed upon Him by all from 5 P. M. that, under these circumstances and especially as nearly an hour had already elapsed after the time announced for the commencement of the evening's meeting, it was evidently not intended by Mr. Bharati to come and explain things to the audience as he had promised in the morning! And yet, in spite of the counter-meeting, the scurrilous pamphlets and the repeated pressure from the audience, His Holiness stuck to the position that, in the absenee of the other side, he was—on principle—absolutely against making an *ex-parte* statement about the reasons for the dropping of the discussion!

And while He was still reiterating this view, both the Bharatis came in (at 5-27 P. M.); and Mr. S. S. Bharati explained that he had started in time, but the unfortunate closing of the Railway gates just then at the level-crossing and his consequent detention thereat for more than 45 minutes were responsible for the delay in his coming! He then briefly explained to the house the reasons for the decision to abandon the debate; but, in the course thereof, there were some "terminological inexactitudes" and a few omissions of a rather serious character! He said absolutely nothing therein about the question of admission of Nadars etc, into the temple-mantapam—*the* point, in fact, over which the whole arrangement really and finally fell through; And, on the positive side, he merely stated that, owing to the special circumstances of the case and the consequent natural impossiblity of having a suitable umpire, it had been decided to discuss the Scriptural position by means of correspondence; but he spoke as if that proposal had emanated from His Holiness! It was thereupon pointed out to him that this was a *topsy turvy* version of the morning's conversation! And then, in the presence of that huge concourse of people, he

said that the proposal for debate by correspondence did turn up at the morning's talk, but he could not be sure at whose initiative, exactly, it began; and anyhow, there was no need to go into that matter, because discussion by correspondence was, in his estimation, a really much better and more satisfactory method than the one originally contemplated; and, his being responsible for mooting such a proposal was all the more creditable to him; and he congratulated himself that he had made such a splendid proposal, so much more satisfactory than the original one! He then announced that as there was another meeting which he had to address elsewhere and as he had to start the same night for Chidambaram, he would attend His Holiness's discourse just for a brief while and then take leave of us. His Holiness desired him to stay and hear both the 2 day's lectures; but he replied that there was important work of the Annamalainagar University which he had to attend to and for which he must go. And on His Holiness pointing out that the next day (being a Sunday) could not be a working-day for the University, he said that there was another engagement which he must attend on that day too there! And he accordingly heard His Holiness's discourse from 5-47 to 6-33 P. M. and left.

THE SEQUEL.

The actual facts connected with the debate-fiasco have, in the preceding pages, been narrated clearly and in chronological order from the beginning to the end (i. e. from 16th January down to 24th March), and the correspondence has also been appended in its proper chronological order. And yet, in spite of all these facts and all these letters, all those who have seen all this correspondence and heard all the talks connected therewith and Mr. Bharati's speech are astounded to find the newspapers publishing all sorts of false and distorted versions of the whole affair; and we are sorry to note that Mr. L. Krishnaswamy Bharati has begun this most unjustifiable propaganda against Truth and that Mr.

S. Somasundara Bharati too has not evinced sufficient strength of character to come forward with a correct statement of the facts and give a quietus to such false propaganda, but has actually helped it with his mixtures of untruths, half truths and quibblings calculated to save his own prestige and that of the Madura wire-pullers at the expense of Truth ! This is why we have been compelled to request His Holiness to let us publish the whole correspondence with these running comments of ours thereon. We have only to conclude by drawing the attention of the public and giving categorical replies to those specific points, which are in the nature of serious deviations from strict historical accuracy, in the published statements of the two Bharatis !

N. N.
T. K. B.

CATEGORICAL ANALYSIS.

It is impossible for me to know how many newspapers in Madras and elsewhere received—from their "own" and other correspondents—a report of the speech made by Mr. S. S. Bharati at the commencement of the proceedings at the Shankara Temple Mantapam on the evening of the 24th March. But my attention has been drawn to—and have actually seen—the reports contained in one or more issues of *the Tamil Nadu, the India, the Swadesamitran, the Hindu, the Indian Express and the Sunday Times*, and the editorial and other comments in some of them.

2. The first characteristic feature which one notes with regard to all the reports is, that, although the editorial doctrine and policy of each one of these papers is one of strong opposition to Untouchability and consequently to His Holiness's propaganda in favour of the orthodox position hereon, and although the various "Own Correspondents" of all these papers must necessarily be and doubtless are of different schools of thought and belief and perhaps a great majority of these correspondents themselves is

of the reformer breed, yet the actual reports sent to these various newspapers with full and elaborate details of the proceedings by their "own" several correspondents are on the whole, a correct and accurate record of what actually took place at the meeting! Their language is different, their dimensions are different and their very outlook is different; but the sum-total of the general impression produced on the reader's mind by their different accounts is, on the whole, the same; and they all concur, on the whole, with the detailed account, given herein above, of the actual facts. It is morally and psychologically—impossible to account for this most unusual, nay extraordinary—convergence of all the reports sent by these various "own correspondents" of the different papers, the more especially as all of them happen to be correspondents of papers hostile to the views of His Holiness and most of them are themselves personally hostile thereto, except on the basis that the facts were really as we have represented them herein-above and that, in spite of their own natural pro-reformist partialities and predelictions and the reformist policy of their paper, the various correspondents faithfully performed their DUTY as reporters and sent, to their various papers, a fairly accurate report of the actual proceedings of the meeting.

3. Over against this, there is the sad spectacle for us to ponder over, that, after two such reports—brief and elaborate respectively—were published in *Tamil Nadu and India* in their issues of 26th March, Mr. L. K. Bharati's distorted version of the facts appeared (in the shape of letters and telegrams) on the 27th and in subsequent issues of "Tamil Nadu" and other papers which not merely published it with eagerness and gusto but went out of their way to take its truth for granted and to publish editorial and other comments based thereon against His Holiness, and that too in the most approved of scurrilous style of the usual Billingsgate type! Doubtless, this was because Mr. L. K. Bharati's false version was more in accordance with what these papers themselves desired; and, regardless of what

their "own correspondents" had reported, they threw overboard their own trusted reporters on the spot and preferred to circulate and base their comments on the partisan version given by Mr. L. K. Bharati! It is no exaggeration to say that, in some cases, the worst language, style and other features of the worst type of rabid "yellow" journalism have been resorted to by the papers in question!

4. In the midst of these brilliant specimens of modern up-to-date journalism, we are gratified to note, that, on receiving its "own" correspondent's report of the proceedings and Mr. L. K Bharati's version thereof, and finding very serious and irreconcilable differences not merely between the two versions but even between the reported descriptions of the actual position by the two Bharatis themselves, the "Hindu" had the editorial sense of fairplay to write immediately an urgent letter to its own correspondent at Trichinopoly, asking him to give a definite, authoritative and, if necessary, more extensive report of the matter by telegram, so that the "Hindu" might publish in its columns the whole thing together, with the result that, on page 2 of the *Hindu's* issue of the 28th March, its own correspondent's first report, Mr. L. K. Bharati's telegram and the own correspondent's final telegram were all published together in the natural, historical and chronological order! The last of these three items having contained a fairly detailed report of the final correspondence between Mr. S. S. Bharati and His Holiness, the final picture presented by the "Hindu" in this way would have enabled the unbiassed reader to arrive at a fairly correct conclusion on the actual historical facts of the case!

5. In the next place, the "Swadesamitran" in its issue of the 28th March similarly published, although on different pages (viz., the 6th and the 3rd) Mr. L. K. Bharati's version and its "own" correspondent's full and detailed report. Thus the "Swadesamitran" too must have helped unprejudiced readers (who saw both accounts) to form a fairly correct estimate of the actual facts!

6. On my attention being drawn to Mr. L. K. Bharati's garbled version and the scurrilous editorial article on புரி திட்டம் in the "Tamil Nadu" of the 27th March and being unaware what other anti-Sanatani papers might have received and published the same false version, I at once despatched a lengthy telegram to (1) *Tamil Nadu* (2) *Justice* (3) *India,* (4) *the Indian Express*, and (5) the *Andhra Patrika* (all of Madras) a fairly lengthy telegram on the matter as follows :—

From,

T. K. Balasubramania Iyer of Srirangam.

To.

Justice, Madras,
Tamil Nadu, Madras,
India, Madras,
Indian Express, Madras,
Andhra Patrika, Madras,

"Anent Krishnaswami Bharati's telegram published in Madras papers about reason for failure of expected public debate with His Holiness Puri Sankaracharya regarding untouchability, please note that statement gives utterly garbled version of facts. Holiness never suggested private discussion. Actual difficulty arose about definition of public and private debate.

"Two months after acceptance of debate proposal, *i. e.* just a week before date fixed therefor, it was suddenly-suggested that debate should be presided over by an umpire. His Holiness replied that an umpire should not be an absolute ignoramus ignorant of Shastraic matters, but one of higher attainments and qualifications therein than controversialists themselves. He had no objection to such person; but umpire of different kind with authority to give decisions would be a negation of common sense and farcical travesty of democratic procedure. His Holiness regarded himself as earnest student and searcher after truth and was always willing to learn but could not possibly accept preposterous pseudo-democratic proposition for an ignorant umpire! As for time-limit, Holiness categorically stated

he would put no restrictions on Bharati's liberty to take his own time.

"Bharati acknowledged this reply, thanked Holiness for his graciously kind and courteous message and stated he would not like to forego the privilege of meeting Holiness and intimated his intended arrival at Srirangam on 24th.

"After arrival, Bharati reiterated proposal for Umpire but finally withdrew his insistence and actually said so at public meeting.

"Actual hitch arose about another point altogether *viz.*, admission of representatives of depressed classes into Temple Mantapam where debate was to have been held. Question at debate being justifiability or otherwise of such admission, Holiness considered there was no sense in having academic discussion thereon after actually permitting such admission!

"On final decision by Bharati to abandon debate, Holiness and others including Rao Sahib Natesier of Madura and myself once again finally insisted that, public intimation having been given about debate, a huge audience was naturally bound to gather and would go away disappointed and therefore debate should be held, but Bharati himself stated that no delicacy need be felt hereon, that Holiness need not disappoint audience but may discourse to them on very subject, he would himself attend it and start proceedings by announcing to house circumstances under which debate was abandoned and this he actually did.

"Although meeting date was nine weeks after Madura proposal, yet new definition of public debate as one presided over by Umpire cropped up suddenly just one week before date of meeting and insistence on admission of Nadars and other untouchables just six hours before meeting time! You can judge for yourself where and how difficulty arose and whether His Holiness really evaded public debate or the contrary happened!"

This telegram was despatched by me on the morning of the 29th March.

7. I do not know whether 'Justice' and the 'Andhra Patrika' published the above telegram or not. But this I do know *i. e.* that "India" merely stated that it had received from me a telegram describing Mr. L. K. Bharati's version as an incorrect one while the *Tamil Nadu* and the *Indian Express*, absolutely suppressed not merely the whole telegram but even all references thereto! Although Mr. L K. Bharati's statement was an absolutely uncorroborated one and although my telegram contained detailed quotations from the correspondence herein-above published, yet these papers have shown their sense of Impartiality Fairplay, Justice, Love of Truth and all the rest of it by rejecting and suppressing the documents-corroborated version sent by me and accepting as gospel truth and circulating broadcast Mr. L. K. Bharati's absolutely uncorroborated version and even publishing editorial and other comments based on the latter and couched in language of the most objectionable type, which is not merely un-Indian in tone and in siprit but also offensive under all canons of elementary journalistic etiquette, except in what western slang tellingly and picturesquely describes as the "*Gutter Press*!" Such is the level of degradation to which, in the sacred name of Nationalism, Justice, Purity, Self-Respect and so forth, modern Indian journalism has alas! descended today!

8. Going into the actual facts at issue, we may point out that the herein-above published correspondence will doubtless have made the actual position fairly clear to every one. I do not therefore, propose to take up all the false allegations seriatim and answer them one by one. It is my duty, however,—to and I shall, therefore—draw the reader's attention to certain salient points and issues which the other party has studiously sought to misrepresent and confuse and which therefore ought to be elucidated. This I proceed to do.

I. WAS THERE A CHALLENGE?

1. Mr. Natesa Iyer's note No. 1 on Letter No 1 (published in this pamphlet) will make it clear that the word "challenge" repeatedly used in the reports from the other side, as if a *challenge* had really and truly emanated from His Holiness, is, to put it euphemistically, a "*terminological inexactitude.*" I therefore do not dwell on this further.

2. In the statement published in the *Hindu* of the 2nd April, Mr. S S. Bharati says that His Holiness of Puri "publicly challenged the Harijan Seva Workers in Madura for a public debate". This statement was the first source from which His Holiness Himself ever heard about any such thing. All that He said in the course of His Madura lecture, was, that there was absolutely no justification in the Sanatani Scriptures for the "reformers" temple-entry movement and anti-untouchability movement. On hearing this Mr. L. K. Bharati, got up excitedly to shout that he accepted that challenge". But even then, there was absolutely no reference to the Harijan Seva Sangham workers of Madura, even in Mr. L K. Bharati's spectacular response to what he called His Holiness's "challenge". It is therefore impossible for me to trace the genesis of this cock-and-bull story about a *challenge* and that too, to the "Harijan Seva Workers of Madura".

II. WHY WAS THE DEBATE NOT HELD AT MADURA?

3. Mr. Natesa Iyer's Note No. 2 on the same letter (No. 1) would have made it clear that the debate was to have been held *after* His Holiness's return to Madura! There is, therefore, no point—except deliberate misleading of the public—in Mr L. K. Bharati's oft-published statement that, for about 15 days, he received no intimation about any arrangement having been made for the holding of the debate.! As a matter of fact, as soon as His Holiness came back to Madura

and the Conference there was over, arrangements were actually made for the holding of the debate and intimation was given to Mr. L. K. Bharati, three days in advance, of the date fixed for the debate !

4. Here comes a very important point showing how *Suppresiso veri* and *Suggestio falsi* are the stock in-trade of these propagandists: Mr. L. K. Bharati just simply says that, "*after some correspondence*" (which, however, he does not go into details of, obviously because it is inconvenient to him—from his point of view of *Suppressio veri*—to do so) 24th March was fixed for the debate at Trichinopoly! He does not in this connection, specifically mention that 28th February was actually fixed for the purpose at Madura and that two letters were sent to him on the 25th of February intimating this fact, but that, on account of his own absence of a week from Madura, the arrangements fell through and that his own letter (published herein as letter No. 3) acknowledged belated receipt of the two letters sent by Mr. Natesa Iyer on the matter and so on ! A *Suppressio veri* is the indispensable preliminary to and pre-requisite for a *Suggestio falsi*; and a perusal of that letter and this statement (of Mr. Bharati's) will make it clear to the reader that, in this *Suppressio veri* (i.e. the omitting of all these details of the actual historical fact of the matter), Mr. L. K. Bharati's intention is manifestly a *Suggestio falsi* i.e an insinuation calculated to throw on His Holiness the responsibility for the debate being held at Trichy and not at Madura itself as originally proposed : The impartial reader can infer for himself, from this, how much or how little is regard for "*the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth*" Mr L. K. Bharati's strong point ?

5. In this connection, it is my duty to mention that, in Mr. S. S. Bharati's speeches of the 24th March at Srirangam and Trichinopoly, he too actually said that, although there was a week's time during which His Holiness *might* have held the debate at Madura itself, yet, because of His being busy with His Gita lectures

for a week at Madura and His engagements at other places between Madura and Trichinopoly, He *could* not and did not arrange to have this discussion at Madura itself and that this was why it was held over until 24th March at Srirangam.

6. When Mr. S. S. Bharati was saying all this Mr. L. K. Bharati was sitting *next* to him and, yet, did not think it his elementary and fundamental duty to state at once what has really and actually happened at Madura i. e. that His Holiness did arrange for the debate at Madura itself, had kept that evening clear of all other functions and had also given 3 days clear notice to Mr. Bharati but Mr. L. K. Bharati's own absence from Madura *during that entire week* was responsible for the delay and postponement that actually happened (as specifically acknowledged in and proved by his own letter to Mr. Natesa Iyer i. e. Letter No. 3 of this pamphlet)!

7. In his statement to the *Hindu*, Mr. S. S. Bharati goes one step still further and dogmatically asserts that his Holiness *should* have held the public debate immediately in Madura itself, but that, even though His Holiness stayed in Madura for over a week thereafter, the debate was not held: This erroneous statement which Mr. S. S. Bharati originally made at the public meetings at Srirangam and Trichy is thus found repeated by him in black and white in his contribution to the *Hindu* !

8. Now, if, at the time of his speeches and his writings, Mr. S. S. Bharati knew about these facts, then his deliberate suppression of such knowledge and his specious explaining of the delay by His Holiness' Gita lectures at Madura and His engagements on the way, surely constitute something worse than a "*terminological inexactitude*" !

9. If however, Mr. L. K. Bharati had not previously informed him of these facts and Mr. S. S. Bharati was therefore sincerely in error, then it was Mr.

L. K. Bharati's clear and elementary duty *as a moral being* to stand up at once at the Srirangam meeting, and correct the mistake and explain, to the huge audience assembled there, the actual facts which Mr. S. S. Bharati had not been informed of and which therefore he had naturally but wrongly given a different version of : And yet, not only did Mr. L. K. Bharati *not* do so there, but, even after many such letters and statements have been published in the newspapers, he has not merely *not* contradicted such parts thereof as are *wrong to his knowledge* but has gone further and taken *active* part in the reprinting and *circulating* of such inaccurate—not to say, false—versions of the facts! No further comment is necessary on the matter.

10. If and when we place over against this incident and contrast therewith, the other picture of His Holiness's quietly waiting for a whole hour for the arrival of the Bharatis at the Srirangam meeting and His firmly *refusing to say anything ex-parte*, it must be clear to everybody on which side the strength of Truth lay and where the *strength of lies lies*!

III. THE INCONSISTENCIES IN THE VERSIONS.

11. In passing, I may just point out that the versions of facts as given by the two Bharatis themselves differ from each other in salient points and that the different versions of each of them to different newspapers, differ too from one another. Many instances thereof may be quoted for proving indubitably how unreliable all their versions are. Some examples of this type are given hereunder, at the proper psychological places, in order to enable the reader to judge for himself on the matter!

IV THE UMPIRE QUESTION.

12. In his statement to the *Hindu*, Mr. S. S. Bharati says that, in his *letter* to His Holiness' agent, he

had asked for " some neutral impartial umpire or moderator, not to give a verdict on the debate but to regulate and control the debate itself and to see that the disputants conform to the rules of public debate"! We challenge Mr. Bharati to show this from his letter! In reality, no such thing was actually mentioned *anywhere* in his letter; and it will be also quite clear from His Holiness's reply thereto that the question of the umpire was associated merely with the giving of a decision on the matter at issue and with nothing else.

13. As for Mr. L. K. Bharati's statement that the Bharatis *personally* represented to His Holiness that they desired an umpire, not for giving a decision, but merely for giving rulings, to ensure equal facilities to both sides, to prevent irrelevent matters being discussed and to control the audience, we need only point out (1) that, as His Holiness had already clearly stated in His letter that He would put absolutely no restrictions on Mr. S. S. Bharati's liberty to take his own time and that he might take not merely 15, 20 or 45 minutes as he desired *but as much time as he might find necessary* for the presentation of his texts, facts and arguments there was absolutely no need and no justification for an umpire to ensure the giving of equal liberty and facilities and so forth; (2) that the ruling out of irrelevent matters was not necessary because, His Holiness was not going to talk irreleventiy and was "chivalrous enough" to say in our presence—in so many clear terms (to the Bharatis) that He was absolutely confident Mr. Bharati was not going to talk irreleventiy and even in the contingency of his actually doing so at any time, His Holiness was not going to object even to that; and (3) that there was no possibility of the audience gathered at the Sankara Temple Mandapam, Srirangam, behaving in an unruly manner and an umpire being needed to control it; nay, the very idea that some other umpire could *control* an audience which had got out of His Holiness's control is simply ridiculous. As a matter of fact, when Mr. Bharati actually addressed that audience and made statements which were half-truths and dis-

tortions of facts, and had subsequently to make, although grudgingly, some amendments of his own first statement, even then the audience was absolutely quiet, did not resent the unsavoury insinuations contained in his speech and, at some points, actually applauded and cheered some of his sentiments! Under these circumstances, there was certainly no need for an umpire to control an audience of that sort.

14. Neither in his letter to the Agent nor in his private talk with His Holiness did Mr. S. S. Bharati specify any particular person as an umpire. And it was after he had taken leave of His Holiness and come out into the verandah and when he was talking to me and Mr. Natesa Iyer that he mentioned the name of Father Ely as an umpire; and yet, in the communication under review, he has written to the "Tamil Nadu" that he suggested (*to His Holiness*) a neutral person like '*Kardi Roma Samiar*' and that His Holiness insisted that the umpire should be a Vaidika Sanatani and not of inferior status to Himself as an Acharya! I regret I have no option but to describe this not as a "*terminological inexactitude*" but as something much worse. His Holiness had never heard the name nor known about even the existence of such a person as Father Ely or of any '*Kardi Roma Samiar*' until His attention was called to and actually read this part of Mr. S. S. Bharati's wonderful communication to the *Tamil Nadu* of the 29th March!

15. The allegation that His Holiness referred at any stage of the correspondence, at the conversation or at the public meeting, to His Ecclesiastical status is absolute fiction! On the contrary, He had stated categorically—both in writing and orally—that He claimed *no* Ecclesiastical position, that He was willing to *learn* and that He would give full facilities to all. But of course, He was not prepared to have such matters decided by the votes of the ignorant mob or the verdict of a so-called but ignorant "umpire"! There was absolutely nothing written or said by His Holiness with regard to the *Pontifical* position held by Him!

16. In the counter-meeting of the 24th March at Trichy (as reported in the *Hindu* of 28th March), Mr. Bharati is said to have stated that His Holiness had, in His reply to Mr. S. S. Bharati's letters, stipulated that the umpire should be superior to himself and so on! From my careful study of His Holiness's letter and also the actual conversation, I can authoritatively say—and any one with even ordinary brains can plainly see—that the only reference ever made by His Holiness to the umpire's qualifications was that *in order to be able to give a binding verdict*, he should necessarily be of *higher* attainments and qualifications than the controversialists themselves and that any proposal for an umpire of a different kind but *with authority to give decisions* would be the negation of common sense and a farcical travesty of democratic procedure! Under these circumstances, is it "the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth" or a mere half-truth for Mr. Bharati to say that His Holiness stipulated an Umpire superior to Himself? If this be a correct rendering of His Holiness's letter and words, are we then to infer that Mr. S. S. Bharati acknowledges His Holiness to be *ipso facto* a superior authority to himself on these matters and that an umpire with still superior qualifications must *much more therefore* be superior to Mr. Bharati too? In that case, we have no quarrel with and no objection to such an interpretation.

17. And then, one cannot but point out that to go on for two long months talking about an open public debate, to spring almost at the last moment a new definition of a debate as one at which an umpire was absolutely necessary, and then, because His Holiness saw no need for it, to say that he evaded a public debate—how far this is in accordance with Truth, people may easily perceive for themselves.

18. And, besides, there are Mr. S. S. Bharati's own categorical admissions not merely at the meeting but even in his letters to the Press, to the effect that he ultimately waived his insistence on having an umpire.

Why then should he continue this misrepresentation that by declining the Bharati's proposal for an umpire His Holiness shirked an open public debate?

V. THE QUESTION OF TIME-LIMIT

19. In the second place, a great and grand grievance has been sought to be made by both the Bharatis of the simple fact that His Holiness did not agree to a time-limit. His Holiness's reply to Mr. Bharati must have made it clear to everybody (including the Bharatis) that in His opinion, such subjects could not be discussed and disposed of in a few minutes. As practising lawyers, are not both the Bharatis naturally and necessarily aware that, even in Courts of Law, there are no mechanical time-limits and that things drag on, not for a few hours or days but even for months and sometimes even for years?

20. Now, to take a hypothetical instance. Suppose there was a time-limit of say 30 minutes for each spokesman, and Mr. Bharati placed before the audience within those thirty minutes, a mere list of thirty passages which, without explaining or even translating, he claimed to be clear proofs that untouchability was un-Shastraic. Would not His Holiness, in that case, require much more than thirty minutes to *explain* the passages in question and show that Mr. Bharati's interpretation thereof and inference therefrom were absolutely wrong? And if He were mechanically and rigorously restricted to thirty minutes, would not His Holiness then merely have to say that those passages were irrelevent to the matter on hand and proved nothing or even proved the perhaps diametrical contrary to what Mr. Bharati had based thereupon? If thus the debate was to be a mere assertion on the one side and a mere denial on the other (that certain scriptural passages justified untouchability-removal and the temple-entry movement), what was the need for the farce of an open public "discussion" of such an utterly futile—nay, preposterous and impotent—character?

21. And, after all, did not Mr. Bharati himself openly state, not merely in the private conversation but even at the public meeting at Srirangam, that the matters under discussion were such as *really* necessitated a huge lot of time, but that being *Paratantra* and therefore not master of his own time, he could not afford to share the necessary time for it and, therefore, correspondence would be preferable even if it should last for some months. And did he not also ask thereat, whether there was any marriage or other such *Muhoorta* that would be imperilled by delaying the debate? And was not all this an admission by Mr. S. S. Bharati that a time-limit of a few minutes was not a reasonable thing to stipulate in such serious matters as the one under discussion?

22. And, besides, His Holiness could not—and no sane English-knowing person could—gather, from Mr. S. S. Bharati's letter, that he was asking for a *restriction* to be placed on the time to be allowed to each! On the contrary, repeated emphasis was laid therein on the desirability of His Holiness giving equal liberty and facilities to the other side too. And His Holiness gladly and immediately responded by agreeing to give Mr. Bharati as much time as he might need for his purpose. Under these circumstances, there certainly could be no grievence on this matter. In fact, His Holiness had no inkling at all that there was a desire (on the part of the other party) for limitation of time. On the contrary, it was understood that the other side desired an opportunity for unfettered discussion with equal facilities therefor. And it was only after the papers published Mr. L. K. Bharati's grievance about the time-limit that His Holiness and others here could understand that what was desired by the other side was not free and equal scope for a discussion but only a mechanical time-limit within which the whole thing ought to be concluded. But this (as His Holiness had already pointed out in His letter and as Mr. S. S Bharati practically admitted

at the Srirangam meeting) would have been most incongruous, not to say positively farcical!

23. And, then, in the statement published in the *Tamil Nadu* of the 29th March, we find Mr. S. S. Bharati saying that His Holiness refused to accept any time-limit *for Himself*. When, however, as a matter of fact and on the contrary, His Holiness had actually written to say that the discussion and determination of such serious affairs within a mechanical time-limit of a few minutes was something incongruous, that he would therefore place no restrictions and that he would *give* to Mr. Bharati as much time as he might need for his purpose, is it the truth or a mere halt-truth or something still worse, to say that His Holiness would accept no time-limit *for Himself*?

VI. THE ADMISSION OF THE UNTOUCHABLES.

24. Then, as for the grand point that His Holiness did not agree to the admission of Nadars and others into the Temple Mantapam, my telegram to the newspapers on the matter must have already made it clear to all, that His Holiness held—and rightly, necessarily and unavoidably held—that there was no *sense* in *actually* admitting such people into the temple and then holding an *academic* discussion as to their admissibility or otherwise.

25. And, besides, this point too was sprung upon us at the very last moment! What shall (or need we say on the peculiar topsy-turvy procedure by which, for two long months, no such unheard-of (nay undreamt-of) definitions of a public debate and no such stipulations as regards an umpire and the admission of Nadars and others are even hinted at but are sprung on us at the nick of time and, because His Holiness cannot and does not accept such definitions and terms of an "open public debate", He is described as having shirked it and so on!

VII. THE EXACT VENUE OF THE DEBATE.

26. Mr. L. K Bharati's letter to the *Swadesamitran* avers that Mr. S. S. Bharati's *letter* to His Holiness's Agent contained a stipulation about the exact place at which the debate should be held! Mr. L. K. Bharati's own statements as published in the *Hindu*, and even in the *Tamil Nadu* however make no such allegation! With this however, I am not particularly concerned. What I am now really concerned to point out is, that I have ransacked Mr. S. S. Bharati's letter to His Holiness in the original and from the top of the first page to the bottom of the last one and have been absolutely and utterly unable to find out any the least trace therein of any such stipulation! I therefore challenge Mr. L. K. Bharati to point out any such thing in the letter.

27. And then, I am horrified to note that Mr. S. S. Bharati too has made a similar allegation, in the *Tamil Nadu* of the 29th March and in some others of his own different versions to the newspapers! I challenge him too, therefore, to point out any such part of his letter! For the benefit of the public, I am willing, if necessary, to publish a facsimile of his own letter (and of His Holiness' reply) so that the reader may judge, for himself, as to the kind and type of clients whom we have to deal with, in this kind of propaganda which passes for modern up-to-date journalism, in India, at the present day.

28. In his statement to the *Hindu*, Mr. S. S. Bharati definitely states that, in his letter to His Holiness's Agent, he had asked for "the venue of the debate to be some public place open to all the public." I have already shown, in the previous parts of this pamphlet, how this question was sprung upon us suddenly and at the last moment. It only remains for me now, once more, to challenge Mr. S. S. Bharati to point out, in his letter, any such thing!

29. From all this, it is absolutely clear that this was undoubtedly stage-managed thunder! In other words, it was obviously a smart device for the dropping of the debate (Via the question of admission of Nadars and others into the temple Mantapam) and that this transparent subterfuge is sought to be propped up by means of the *white lie* that there was a previous stipulation—in Mr. Bharati's *letter* itself—on the matter! There *never was* any such thing.

30. Mr. Bharati also says that, beyond objecting to the proposal for an umpire and for time-limits, His Holiness took no exception to the *other* points raised in his (Mr. Bharati's) letter regarding the debate. He thereby implies and insinuates that His Holiness agreed to the never-stipulated stipulation about the exact venue of the debate. We would like Mr. Bharati to substantiate this allegation from either his own letter or from His Holiness's reply thereto!

31. That His Holiness "insisted on the debate taking place in his own quarters" is another similar allegation which deserves the same appellation as just afore-given i.e. a white lie. It was to us (i. e. myself and Mr. Natesa Aiyar, that Mr. Bharati, for the first time, spoke of the untouchables and said that them too we should provide for at the meeting but when His Holiness heard about this, it was He that asked us if some other venue could not be found for the purpose? And yet, even here, Mr. Bharati has sought fit to make this baseless allegation that His Holiness "insisted on having the debate at His residential quarters"!

32. In passing, I may just simply mention that Mr. Bharati's description of the Sankaracharya Temple Mantapam at Srirangam as His Holiness's "private residence" or as being attached thereto, is also more than a "terminological inexactitude", inasmuchas His Holiness did *not* reside in the temple or the Mantapam and His actual residence was in the "Sringeri House" adjacent to the Shankaralaya.

33. The next statement, i. e. that Mr. Bharati suggested to His Holiness the holding of the debate in a common public building such as the Nationel College, Trichinopoly or even the High School premises in Srirangam and expressed his reluctance to accept His Holiness's "private residence" is absolutely *new news* to all of us. It was *after* the Bharati's took leave of His Holiness and came to the verandah and when they were talking to me and to Mr. Natesa Iyer there and when the talk had already turned about the admission of Nadars and others into the Tample Mantapam, that His Holiness came out to go downstairs for His noon bath and Pooja and then, on being informed of the new hitch that had arisen, in this respect, it was *His Holiness* that first suggested to us the idea of holding the debate elsewhere! It was *He* that suggested the possibility of the Srirangam High School for the purpose. But it was not found possible by me to make the necessary arrangements within the short time yet at our disposal. This will be clear from Mr. Bharati's own statement to the contrary contained in the "Tamil Nadu" of the 29th March, reprinted in leaflet form by an irresponsible Press at Madura and circulated broadcast as his official version of the "Truth"!

34. The fun from one standpoint and the tragedy from another, of the whole position, is to be found in the fact that, in his own communications to the Press, Mr. Bharati has himself related that His Holiness has "instructed his agents to see if the evening's debate could be held at some other place" and so forth! In the light of this very statement of Mr. Bharati himself is it not plain that there was *no* insistence by His Holiness on the debate being held at His Holiness's "residential quarters"? In fact, as I have just said, the question of the place did *not* come up before His Holiness at all but in the outer verandah when the Bharatis talked to me and to Mr. Natesa Iyer; and *as soon as* His Holiness heard about this new difficulty with regard to the admission of the untouchables, it was He that *at once* suggested a way out of the diffi-

culty by asking us to arrange for the debate at the Srirangam High School or elsewhere and it was *we* that, within the short space of time at our disposal, could not arrange matters as desired by His Holiness.

35. And, besides, this admission that, after or at the end of the morning's conversation, His Holiness suggested another place for the meeting, is the clearest possible proof that His Holiness's refusal to accept an umpire and to agree to a time-limit was not the real cause of the breakdown of the debate, and that the real hitch arose over the admission of the untouchables into the Shankara Temple Mantapam! Why and how comes, it about then that the Bharatis and others do not admit and stress this plain historical fact but go about beating the bush and making all sorts of baseless allegations? All that I can say is that it really passes my comprehension.

VIII. WHO SUGGESTED CORRESPONDENCE ?

36. As regards Mr. L. K. Bharati's wire to the *Hindu* (published on 28th March) i. e that His Holiness "suggested a private talk in his residence and expressed reluctance for a public debate, I need only say that I am simply astounded at and, at the same time, cannot but sincerely admire, the stupendous temerity of a person in Mr. Bharati's responsible public position, who can come forward, with all seriousness, to send to the newspapers, for publication, such horrid and unadulterated lies!

37. It is worth noting that, in his telegram to the 'Hindu', Mr. L. K. Bharati merely says that "discussion by correspondence was settled", but he does not say anything at all as to who mooted the proposal? I need only say that the whole procedure has, all the time, been one of skating on thin ice and not committing oneself but quibbling and trusting to chance for a way out afterwards.

38. One of the biggest and the hugest lies of all is Mr. S. S. Bharati's statement that His Holiness said that

"he had never intended to have an open debate but only desired a private conversation with Mr. Bharati alone. and to ascertain the truth thereby". Such a statement may be flattering to Mr. Bharati's vanity, that a mere private conversation with his learned self would reveal new scriptural Truths to His Holiness, who has from His early childhood, been a student of comparative Religion. But, certainly, no sane person can accept even the possibility of His Holiness's making such a statement.

39. Worse still, if possible, is the white lie that His Holiness admitted in the open meeting that "He was against an open public debate!" As a matter of fact His Holiness did not speak about these matters at all at the meeting, nay firmly refused to begin the proceedings until after Mr. Bharati himself arrived and spoke! And even then, it was not His Holiness but I and Mr. Natesa Iyer that called Mr. Bharati's attention to his incorrect statements; and even after Mr. Bharati had lamely corrected and grudgingly revised his own first statement before the huge audience of thousands that had gathered in the hope of the open public debate, His Holiness said absolutely nothing about the debate but went straight on to His discourse on the question of "untouchability from the first preliminary standpoint". How then could he have made any such admission ?

40. The allegation that His Holiness himself suggested debate by correspondence is absolutely wrong. It was really Mr. Bharati himself that submitted that any reply given on the spur and in the *heat* of the moment would not contribute *light* thereon but correspondence would give ample scope and opportunity for *cool and calm* reflection on his part; that, if he was satisfied with the texts and the arguments on the Sanatani side, he would say so; that if there was anything further which he had to ask or any doubt still to be cleared, he would correspond on the matter; and that this would be the most satisfactory procedure for his purpose. So the "Hobson's choice" was not his (as alleged in his statement, but His Holiness's only.

41. That His Holiness "expressed dislike for public debate" and that Mr. Bharati was "therefore *forced* to agree to correspondence" is thus not merely not true but is an exactly *topsy turvy* statement of what actually happened.

42. I had no intention to draw the attention of the public to and comment on any unpleasant *personal* factors; but, in the face of these half-truths and full untruths which have emanated from the other side, there is no alternative left to me but to draw attention to the fact that, in reply to His Holiness's invitation to stay another day and hear both the lectures. Mr. S. S. Bharati openly stated at the the public meeting (at Srirangam) that he had an engagement already at Annamalainagar on Sunday. What cleaer proof is necessary, than this, that the Bharatis had not come with the real and serious intention of having an honest public debate but only to fish out and procure at all costs, some pretext and excuse for backing out of the spectacularly engineered debate and had therefore raised the question of the admission of the untouchables into the Temple premises, merely as the *handiest* pretext for such backing out. This is the only inference which an impartial survey of the whole situation drives one to! I am loth to make any *personal* remarks and attribute offensive *personal* motives; but the facts are too patent and transparent to leave me any option in the matter.

43. The facts about His Holiness inviting Mr. S.S. Bharati to stay for 2 days and his reply that he had other engagements already (as just above described) will be found duly and fully reported in the detailed report sent to *India* of Madras by its *own correspondent* and published in its issue of 26th March.

44. Mr. L. K. Bharati concludes his communication to the papers by saying that it was the object of himself and his friends and that it was the duty of them all, to do all in their power, to exterminate untouchability and so forth. So, evidently, the debate was

not for the purpose of a mutal understanding, (as feigned in his own first letter) but merely for dialectical purposes. I need only ask the impartial reader to contrast, with this, the diametrically opposite attitude of His Holiness, who, though the official Eccelesiastical Head of millions of Sanatana Dharmi Hindus, yet clearly stated in His letter to Mr. S. S. Bharati, that He was still merely an earnest student and searcher after Truth, that He was willing to learn from any one whomsoever (irrespective of the person's status and other such things), that He was at all times absolutely ready to give full weight to all evidence that was forthcoming and to alter His position if necessary, on the matter (on the basis of all the available evidence) and that He would do full justice to all the facts, figures, interpretations, arguments and so forth, which (from the Scriptural or any other standpoint whatsoever) might justify His doing so. With such a tremendous and fundamental disparity between the two frames of mind, it is no wonder that the Bharatis had evidently no intention of meeting His Holiness in order to hear and weigh His scriptural and other arguments on the matter.

IX. Mr. S. S. BHARATI'S DISSATISFACTION.

45. Mr. L K. Bharati's telegram published in the *Tamil Nadu* of the 27th informs the world that Mr. S. S. Bharati's letter to him expressed dissatisfaction at His Holiness's reply, but, all the same, added that, as *desired* by His Holiness, he would meet His Holiness at 8 a. m. Now, I must point out that, if Mr. S. S. Bharati had any such dissatisfaction (as alleged) with His Holiness's reply, he ought to have mentioned it not to Mr. L. K. Bharati but to His Holiness himself! On the contrary, we have Mr. S. S. Bharati's own postcard of 22-3-34 specifically thanking His Holiness "for his generously kind and courteous message and invitation" and stating that he "would not lightly forego the privilege of meeting such a personage" and so on (Vide P. C. No. 13-P. 22 published in this series.)

X. THE PERSONAL INTERVIEW.

46. The Bharatis have been—in their press and pamphleteering propaganda—laying a great deal of unnecessary and unjustifiable stress on the fact that they had audience of His Holiness at 8. 40. a. m. on the 24 th March by "special invitation' of His Holiness. It is perfectly true that His Holiness had, in His letter No. 2768 of 21st March, desired Mr. S. S. Bharati to come over and see Him not at 4-30 p. m. (the time fixed for the debate) but, if possible, by about 8-40 a. m. the same morning. But, here again, the usual methods of suppression, half- truths and quibblings has been employed by the Bharatis. For, it was Mr. S. S. Bharati himself that in his letter of 16-3-34, went out of his way to refer to his previous personal acquaintance with His Holiness and stated that he readily accepted his Madura friends' request to be their spokesman for this matter "only in the hope of meeting an illustrious old College mate of rare talents and rarer attainments". And naturally, in response to Mr. Bharati's reference to this personal element, His Holiness reciprocated the loving wish for a meeting and expressed the hope that, "even if the meeting proved of absolutely no benifit from the standpoint of the debate about untouchability, it would surely prove one of pleasure to both from the personal standpoint for "old times' sake"! And He stated categorically that the morning's talk was to be a *personal* talk; and, this was why, when the Bharatis did arrive that morning, His Holiness did *not* say even one word about the debate, until the Bharatis themselves broached the matter! It was no part of His Holiness's intention that morning to talk shop (i. e. about the debate); and, in fact He religiously and scrupulously refrained from even the faintest or remotest allusion to it. A mere reference to Mr. S. S. Bharati's first letter and His Holiness's reply thereto will make this point quite clear, and will suffice to show that there is absolutely no point in the repeated emphasis laid by the Bharatis on their having a "special

invitation" from his Holiness to meet Him in the morning. All that one can say by way of comment on this point is that His Holiness' "*generously kind and courteous message and invitation*" and His reciprocatory response to the personal element which emanated from the other side, have not merely been *flagrantly abused* but also more than *condignly punished.*

47. Then, in Mr. S. S. Bharati's statement, comes the very serious allegation that His Holiness wrote to Mr. Bharati "to come over and settle further details of the debate in the course of a private conversation with His Holiness before the public debate began." I challenge Mr. Bharati to look into his letter once again and to justify this allegation therefrom. Beyond the mere reciprocating of Mr. Bharati's own desire for a personal meeting " for old times' sake' which Mr. Bharati himself had first written about and which therefore His Holiness naturally reciprocated, there was absolutely no such thing in that letter. The personal response was to the personal reference; and the morning's talks were to have been purely *personal.* And, left to His Holiness's own *Sankalpa,* they *would* actually have been *personal.*

48. And, in fact, as I have stated several times already, His Holiness's own talk of the morning was absolutely and purely personal. He referred to their boyhood's days at Tinnevelly, their college days at Madras and so forth, and did not, even by a casual reference, allude to the debate of the evening! And it was Mr. S. S. Bharati himself who brought the debate up into the conversation; and this was admitted by Mr. Bharati himself, not merely in his speech at the counter-meeting of the 24th at Trichinopoly but also in his very communication on the matter to the *Tamil Nadu.* And yet, he has not hesitated to say, in so many words, that His Holiness had asked him to discuss details about the terms of the debate, in a *private* conversation. I challenge him to produce any such material from His Holiness's letter! If necessary, I shall

publish a facsimile of that too, for the benefit of the public.

49 Mr. S. S. Bharati further states, in another place, that His Holiness's *letter* concluded by saying that "other particulars regarding the *debate* might also be settled at a *personal* interview". Let me once again solemnly repeat that the personal meeting was to be merely *for old times' sake* and purely in reciprocation of Mr. Bharati's own reference to the old times; that there was absolutely nothing in His Holiness's letter about the details of the *debate* being discussed in the course of the *personal* meeting; that as a matter of fact, His Holiness did not make even the least casual reference to the evening's function, and that it was Mr. Bharati himself that broached the subject of the evening's debate (as he himself has admitted in his letter published in the *Tamil Nadu* dated 28th March and even in the statement under review. Under the circumstances the alleged offer of His Holiness to settle details of the *debate* and the *private* interview is absolutely baseless.

XI. THE UNADMITTED SASTRI AND AYYA.

50. The statement goes on to complain that Mr. Krishna Shastry of Kumbakonam was not admitted to audience! No one ever mentioned to His Holiness or even to me or to Mr. Nataesa Iyer that any other person sought admission; so the question of refusal of admission could not possibly—and did not actually—arise. His Holiness was informed of the arrival of the two Bharatis and sent for them immediately. This was all that happened.

51. Mr. L. K Bharati's statement informs the public that Mr. Krishna Shastri of Kumbhakonam and Mr. Pattabhirama Ayya of Sholavandan too addressed the counter-meeting of the 24th evening (at Trichy) about His Holiness's refusal to have an open debate. How these two gentlemen who were not present during even a single one of the conversations in question (from

16th January to 24th March) were entitled to deliver lectures on such matters, I do not pretend to be able to understand.

52. Towards the conclusion of his statment, Mr. S. S. Bharati too says that he Mr. L. K. Bharati and Mr. Krishna Shastry of Kumbhakonam explained at the counter meeting at Trichinopoly, *all about the morning's interview.* We should again like to know how Mr. Krishna Shastry who was not *admitted* at all to that interview was entitled to speak on what took place at the interview.

53. Our information, however, is to the effect that Mr. Krishna Shastry did not even utter one word about the morning's debate and interview and that this statment too of the Bharatis is pure imagination!

XII. WHOSE FAULT WAS IT?

54. We learn that, at the counter-meeting held the same (24th) evening at Trichy by the Local Harijan Seva Sangham, the Bharatis and other speakers made a grievance of it that they had come all the way from various distant places and spent a lot of money in order to attend the debate, but their time, energy and money had been wasted because His Holiness declined to accept an umpire and it was therefore decided to discuss the matter by correspondence!

55. In regard to this, the first thing to be pointed out is, that His Holiness had, in his letter, made it absolutely and abundantly clear that He could not possibly accept the proposal for an umpire; if therefore, it was the considered and final view of the Bharatis that a debate without an umpire was no debate at all, they had no business to come over and ask others too to come over, and then complain that their time, energy and money were all wasted. A mere perusal of His Holiness's reply to Mr. S. S. Bharati on this point will suffice to make it perfectly clear that there was absolutely *no* ground for any complaint against His Holiness in

this respect. If, in spite of the clearness of the reply people came and told others too to come from Madura, Sholavandan, Chettinad, Kumbhakonam and other places, it was *their own fault*; and no one with an elementary sense of Truth, Justice and Fairplay could possibly make any such complaint against His Holiness.

XIII. ZERO'S ANTICS.

56. In the next place, we may refer to and dismiss the "candid communication in lighter vein" from ZERO to His Holiness (as published on page 10 of the *Sunday Times* of 1st April 1934). It is impossible to think of such a *huge* tissue of white lies being compressed into such *small* amount of space. I may therefore begin by congratulating ZERO on his brilliant efficiency in this respect. It is absolutely untrue that His Holiness ever challenged Gandhiji to an open debate (or even a closed one, for that matter); that, on Gandhiji's saying "such a spectacular thing would be of no practical value", His Holiness " would not accept it but thundered 'and roared' and proclaimed that Gandhiji was afraid to face Him and ran away from an open challenge" and so on and so forth.

57. And secondly, in the face of the incontestable fact that not merely the '*Hindu*' and the *Swadesamitran* but even '*India*' and the *Tamil Nadu* contained two different versions (one from their "*own correspondents*" on the one hand another from the Bharatis on the other), one would ask ZERO what enqniry and investigation he held in order to find out definitely which version was true and to determine that the "*own correspondents*" of all the papers in question (none of which is a Sanatani) sent deliberately *false* reports. To sum the position up in lighter vein (which alone benefits a reply to a "candid communication in lighter vein"), I may conclude this paragraph by remarking that, as the correspondent has ZERO and as *everyone* of the facts relied on by him in everyone of his sentences is also ZERO, his conclusion too must be and is, actually, a huge big

ZERO! And all the more so, because his letter was actually published on the *All Fools'* Day.

XIV. THE TAMIL NADU'S IMPARTIALITY.

58. I do not propose to do the 'Tamil Nadu's' editorial article of 27th March(under the beautiful Billingsgatian Caption புரியின் ஓட்டம்), the honour of a detailed reply to the scurrilous contents thereof! But I would only point out that His Holiness has, at different places and before audiences of several thousands of highly educated people, been lecturing on this very subject of Untouchability and giving innumerable quotations not merely from the Smritis and Puranas but also from the Vedas themselves and that too as interpreted not only by the orthodox Acharyas even by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati himself! The *Tamil Nadu*'s *facts* as propounded in this article are pure *fiction* (as proved even by the report of its *own correspondent* published in its issue of 26th March); and its conclusion based on such *fictional facts* is therefore equally pure *fiction*. The *Tamil Nadu* is, of course, free to have its own *views* in any subject; but it has no right to *base* such views on utter and absolute *white lies*.

59. I must also mention that the editorial note in the *Tamil Nadu* of the 27th March goes out of its way to call its reader's attention to Mr. L. K. Bharati's letter published on some other page, but makes absolutely *no* reference to its *own correspondent's* detailed report published in the *Tamil Nadu* of the 26th March! May I ask the fair-minded, justice-loving and impartial-minded Dr. Naidu (1) why he has taken this partial attitude as betwen his *own correspondent* and Mr. L. K. Bharati; (2) what material he had, on hand, to discredit the former's report and accept hte latter's version; and (3) whether his wish (for His Holiness' defeat) was the real father to the thought (that His Holiness was defeated) or whether there was any other criterion standard of judgment by which he could and did discriminate between his *own* correspondent's version and the other's?

XV. THE OWN CORRESPONDENTS' REPORTS

60. In passing, I may just mention that, *even after* the publication of the letters of both the Bharatis by the newspapers, the *own* correspondents of the *Tamil Nadu* and *India* have not, *to this day*, written to their papers, justifying in the least the version given by the Bharatis of admitting that their own original reports were incorrect or defective in any particular. This fact alone is sufficiently eloquent for all practical purposes of the impartial reader!

XVI. CONCLUSION.

61. As for the Bharatis' descriptions of other details of the pubiic meeting at Srirangam and the counter-meeting at Trichy, I need only point out that they are *Choke-full* of erroneous statements (as will be clear from a perusal of and a comparison of them with the very lengthy) detailed and elaborate reports sent immediately by the reformist "*own correspondents* of such reformist papers as the "Tamil Nadu" 'India' and so on). It is therefore unnecessary for me to go into further details of and answer seriatim the infinite series of erroneous statements in question. The task is too sickening; the correspondence and other details published herewith must more than suffice to convince that impartial reader of all the historical actualities of the real situation.

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